

Those Witchy Women

Brainstorm

Jot down anything you know or have heard about witches. Share your ideas with the rest of the class.

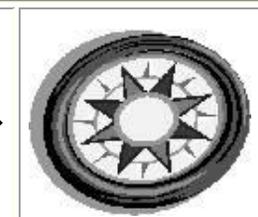
Witchcraft - What is it?

Witchcraft is the term for using magical powers and the supernatural to control people, events and happenings. Most human societies have believed in witchcraft.

Their Powers

In Shakespeare's time, people believed that witches:

could control the weather	could sink ships
had the power of flight	had the ability to make people go mad
could vanish into thin air	would become your enemy if you refused them food
were able to change their physical form	usually 'worked' at night
could see into the future	had contact with the devil and their familiars (animals)
could bring disease and illnesses to crops, animals or people	were able to cast spells (for 'good' and 'bad') by chanting and making potions



James I, Christianity, Gunpowder Plot and Witch-Hunts

Why did people believe in witches?

We live in a world that is full of natural disasters, poverty, crop failures, droughts, death, freak weather, illnesses and disease. Just watch the news one evening and there will probably be a news story covering one (or all) of those areas. In this respect, our world isn't that different to that of Shakespeare's time. However, we now live in a world that is technologically advanced. For example, we have satellite systems that tell us when a hurricane is on the way, or when a volcano is going to erupt. We have vets and doctors who can diagnose and remedy illnesses and diseases that we or our pets may have.

In Shakespeare's time, people did not have the knowledge, understanding and technology that we do today. Therefore, when something went wrong, they tried to explain it in other ways. To us, their ideas may seem ridiculous and absurd, but to them, it made sense. In Shakespeare's time, people believed in witches and often blamed their own misfortunes on witches and witchcraft. Basically, anything bad that happened could (or would) be blamed on witches.

JAMES I

When Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth*, the King of England was James I. He was personally terrified of witches. He believed that a group of witches had raised a storm to try and drown him. He was so scared, he got Parliament to pass a law promising death to anyone practicing witchcraft.



James I (1566-1625)

Remember, remember, the fifth of November,
Gunpowder, treason and plot.
I see no reason why gunpowder treason
Should ever be forgot.

THE GUNPOWDER PLOT

This was a conspiracy to blow up the Houses of Parliament on November 5, 1605. The 'traitors' wanted to kill James I, as well as the Lords and Commons at the state opening. The plot was formed by a group of Roman Catholics, including Guy Fawkes, who didn't like the anti-Catholic laws that James I (as a Protestant) was passing.

CHRISTIANITY

When Christianity became established, the works of the devil became associated with witches. People believed that witches were the Devil's helpers.



Ducking Stool - A 17th-century woodcut of a woman being subjected to the ducking stool. The woman (witch or prostitute) was 'ducked' in the water as punishment for her crimes.

WITCH-HUNTS

Because of peoples' changing attitudes towards witches and witchcraft, not only were witches blamed for 'bad' things, but they became persecuted. Witch-Hunts were extremely popular between 1560 and 1632. During this time, hundreds of thousands of women were tortured and killed because they were accused of witchcraft. In 1589 in the tiny German state of Quedlinburg, 133 women were burned in one day.



MACBETH

ACT 1 SCENE 1

A desert place. Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches.

FIRST WITCH: When shall we three meet again?
 In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

SECOND WITCH: When the hurlyburly's done,
 When the battle's lost and won.

THIRD WITCH: That will be ere the set of sun.

FIRST WITCH: Where the place?

SECOND WITCH: Upon the heath.

THIRD WITCH: There to meet with Macbeth.

FIRST WITCH: I come, Graymalkin.

SECOND WITCH: Paddock calls.

THIRD WITCH: Anon!

ALL: Fair is foul, and foul is fair.
 Hover through the fog and filthy air.
Exeunt

Understanding Act 1 Scene 1

Discuss the importance of the following:

1. The setting.
2. The weather.
3. Entrance of the three witches.
4. The language of the witches.

Stage directions to explain:	Lines to quote and explain:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "<i>A desert place.</i>"• "<i>Thunder and Lightning.</i>"• "<i>Enter three witches.</i>"• "<i>Exeunt</i>"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "When shall we three meet again? In thunder, lightning or in rain?"• "When the battle's lost and won."• "Fair is foul, and foul is fair."• "...fog and filthy air."• "There to meet with Macbeth."

1. Why do you think that Shakespeare begins the play with the witches? Where do the witches meet? What does it tell us about them?
2. What is the weather like? What kind of mood does this set?
3. Find a rhyming couplet which shows that the witches can control the weather. The witches exhibit three more of their powers in this scene. What are they?
4. How do the witches speak? (hint - see 3) What is the effect of this?
5. Find two riddles spoken by the witches. Explain the effect of them. What do the witches stand for?
6. What does this opening scene tell you about the kind of play that is to follow? (That is, what is going to be one of the main themes of the play?)
7. So far, how important do you think that they are going to be to the plot (the story)? Who do they want to meet? Where do they plan to meet him?
8. How do you think the Shakespearean audience would have reacted to this scene?

Remember to write in full and complete sentences. Support your answers with evidence (quotes) from the text. Make sure that you explain any quotes that you use.

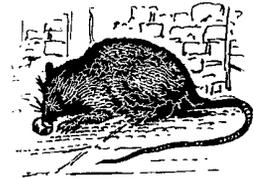
ACT 1 SCENE 3

FIRST W: Where hast thou been, sister?

SECOND W: Killing swine.

THIRD W: Sister, where thou?

FIRST W: A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
And munched and munched and munched. "Give me," quoth I.
Aroint thee, witch!" the rump-fed ronyon cries.
Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' the Tiger;
But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
And, like a rat without a tail,
I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.



SECOND W: I'll give thee a wind.

FIRST W: Th'art kind.

THIRD W: And I another.

FIRST W: I myself have all the other,
And the very ports they blow,
All the quarters that they know
I' the shipman's card.
I will drain him dry as hay;
Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his penthouse lid.
He shall live a man forbid.
Weary sev'n-nights nine times nine
Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine.
Though his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest-tossed.
Look what I have!



SECOND W: Show me, show me!

FIRST W: Here I have a pilot's thumb,
Wracked as homeward he did come.
A drum within.

THIRD W: A drum! A drum!
Macbeth doth come.

ALL: The weird sisters, hand in hand,
Posters of the sea and land,
Thus do go, about, about;
Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
And thrice again, to make up nine.
Peace! The charm's wound up.



Understanding Act 1 Scene 3 (part one)

Tasks

1. What does the second witch say that she has been doing? What kind of job is this?
2. The first witch is annoyed because a woman would not give her chestnuts. How does she say that she is going to get her revenge?
3. What animal does the first witch say she is going to disguise herself as in order to board the sailor's ship? Generally, how do people feel about this kind of animal?
4. What deformity will the animal have? What does this tell us about her powers?
5. The first witch describes what she is going to do to the sailor. She plans a brutal and horrific revenge. Look at the chart on the next page. It contains a list of comments, quotes and explanations but they are all jumbled up.
6. Cut out the chart and paste them into the correct order. Once you are sure that you have them in the correct order, and that you have matched the correct comment, quote and explanation, write a paragraph explaining what the first witch says she is going to do to the sailor.
7. In Shakespeare's time people believed that witches caused illness. What other powers were they believed to have? Do Shakespeare's witches live up to the ideas that people had of them? (Hint - think about the actions, personalities, speech and powers of the witches.)

COMMENT	QUOTE	EXPLANATION
Finally, she determines to throw his life into chaos and confusion.	'Sleep shall neither night nor day Hang upon his penthouse lid.'	Again, we notice the parallels to fate of Macbeth who increasingly fears everything and everyone around him. He trusts no-one, not even his wife - 'partner in greatness'.
The second spell she casts on him is that of a life of sleepless nights.	'I will drain him dry as hay.'	This acts as a precursor to the fate of Macbeth, who feels that he has murdered sleep.
Next she says that his life will be full of fear and horror.	'Though his bark cannot be lost, Yet it shall be tempest-tossed.'	The first witch seems to appreciate that her powers are limited. She realises that his 'bark cannot be lost'. Again, this suggests the fate of Macbeth whose life as king does become chaotic.
Firstly, she uses a simile to describe what she is going to do to him.	'He shall live a man forbid.'	This simile suggests that he is going to be bled to death.

ACT 1 SCENE 3 (continued)

Enter Macbeth and Banquo.

MACBETH: So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

BANQUO: How far is't called to Forres? What are these,
So wither'd and so wild in their attire,
That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,
And yet are on't? Live you? Or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to understand me,
By each at once her choppy finger laying
Upon her skinny lips. You should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.

MACBETH: Speak if you can! What are you?

FIRST W: All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!

SECOND W: All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!

THIRD W: All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be King hereafter!

BANQUO: Good sir, why do you start, and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair? - I' the name of truth,
Are ye fantastical, or that indeed
Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner
You greet with present grace, and great prediction
Of noble having and of royal hope
That he seems rapt withal. To me you speak not.
If you can look into the seeds of time
And say which grain will grow and which will not,
Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear
Your favors nor your hate.

FIRST W Hail!

SECOND W Hail!

THIRD W Hail!

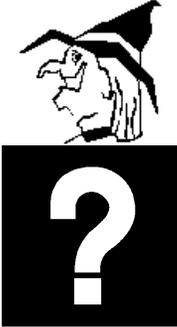
FIRST W Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

SECOND W Not so happy, yet much happier.

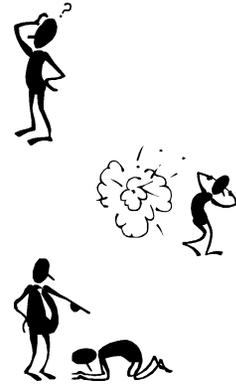
THIRD W Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none.

So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!

FIRST W Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!



MACBETH. Stay, you imperfect speakers! Tell me more!
 By Sinel's death I know I am Thane of Glamis;
 But how of Cawdor? The Thane of Cawdor lives
 A prosperous gentleman. And to be King
 Stands not within the prospect of belief -
 No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence
 You owe this strange intelligence; or why
 Upon this blasted heath you stop our way
 With such prophetic greeting? Speak, I charge you!



Witches vanish.

BANQUO The earth hath bubbles, as the water has,
 And these are of them. Whither are they vanished?

MACBETH Into the air, and what seem'd corporal melted
 As breath into the wind. Would they had stayed!



BANQUO Were such things here as we do speak about?
 Or have we eaten on the insane root
 That takes the reason prisoner?

MACBETH Your children shall be kings.

BANQUO You shall be king.

MACBETH And Thane of Cawdor too; went it not so?

BANQUO To the self-same tune and words.

Who's here?

Enter Ross and Angus.

After the witches vanish, Ross and Angus arrive with news from King Duncan. They tell Macbeth that he is to be the new Thane of Cawdor. Macbeth is surprised, shocked and hopeful. There are a few asides in this scene where we get into Macbeth's mind. Banquo is horrified. He says: 'What! Can the devil speak true?' Banquo and Macbeth briefly discuss the prophecies and the news from Ross and Angus. Banquo is suspicious and wary of the witches and their prophecies and gives the following warning to his friend.

BANQUO: *(Aside to Macbeth.)*
 That, trusted home,
 Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
 Besides the Thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange;
 And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
 The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
 Win us with honest trifles, to betray's
 In deepest consequence.

Understanding Act 1 Scene 3 (part two)

1. What do you notice about the words of Macbeth? Why, do you think, Shakespeare does this?
2. Look at the punctuation in Banquo's speech when he and Macbeth first meet the witches. What is one of the main punctuation marks used?
3. We learn quite a lot about the appearance and physical features of the witches. Make a list (in your own words) of the things that we learn about the witches. You should find seven things!
4. Write a paragraph describing the picture of the witches that has been presented to us. If you want, you can use this template as a guide. You will need to insert a brief and appropriate quote where indicated. (The paragraph follows the order of his speech.)

Shakespeare presents a very _____ picture of the _____ through the _____ and _____ of _____, who is very _____ about the _____ and _____ of the witches. We know this just by looking at the _____ of his speech. Indeed, one of the main punctuation marks used is the _____ . _____ times he _____ who or what they are. He describes the witches as being _____ and of _____ appearance. (Quote) He seems to think that they do not come from, or belong on, _____(Quote) Further, because they look so _____ and _____, he questions whether or not they are actually _____ (Quote) However, he is also aware that they appear to know what he is _____. (Quote) Negative adjectives are used to describe their _____ (Quote) and their _____. (Quote) Banquo is also concerned about the _____ of the witches; he thinks that they might be _____ but he is _____ because they have _____(Quote)

three	physical features	statements	women
asks	fingers	facial hair	earth
confused	lips	negative	unkempt
saying	shabby dressed	question mark	deathly
horrible	appearance	Banquo	concerned
gender	alive	punctuation	witches
questions			

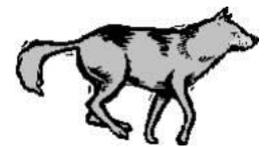
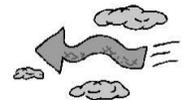
5. What three things do they call Macbeth? Consider the importance of the last one. What do they say to Banquo? What do you think they mean?

6. How does this meeting with the witches affect Macbeth? How does this compare to Banquo's reaction? To help you answer this question, try to find a quote from the text which matches each of the following statements:

- Macbeth's language emulates that of the witches; he seems to enter their evil world.
- Macbeth was frightened when the witches delivered their prophecies.
- Macbeth is lost in thought, thinking about what the witches have told him.
- Banquo is curious about his own fate but he is not prepared to grovel to the witches, nor is he frightened of them and their evil.
- Macbeth is desperate to learn more about what the witches have told him. Indeed, he repeats a similar command a number of times.
- Macbeth views their prophecies positively, though his language (like the witches) also appears to be contradictory.
- When the witches disappear, Banquo questions whether or not they were actually there.
- In contrast, Macbeth believes in their existence and openly says that he wishes they were still there.

ACT 2 SCENE 1

MACBETH: Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee –
I have thee not and yet I see thee still!
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw.
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;
And such an instrument I was to use. -
Mine eyes are made the fools o'th' other senses,
Or else worth all the rest: I see thee still;
And, on thy blade and dudgeon, gouts of blood,
Which was not so before. - There's no such thing.
It is the bloody business which informs
Thus to mine eyes. - Now o'er the half-world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep: Witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings; and withered Murder,
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost. - Thou sure and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my where-about,
And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it. - Whiles I threat, he lives:
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.



A bell rings.

I go, and it is done; the bell invites me.
Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell
That summons thee to Heaven or to hell.

Exit.



SOLILOQUIES

- ❖ A soliloquy is a speech made by one person.
- ❖ The character may be alone on stage or,
- ❖ The character may merely ignore the presence of others.

Dramatic features of a soliloquy:

- ❖ It can express the thoughts, feelings and concerns of a character.
- ❖ What is spoken in a soliloquy is generally assumed to be true, or at least sincere.
- ❖ It helps to develop the action and plot of the play.
- ❖ The audience is aware of the content of the speech – other characters in the play are not.

This speech by Macbeth is a soliloquy. In this speech, Macbeth convinces himself to commit the murder. He imagines he sees a dagger, which seems to lead him on to do the deed.

TASK 1

Work with a partner on a performance of the speech. One of you could be the actor, the other the director.

Make sure you know how all of the words are pronounced. Ask for help if you need it. Read the speech carefully together, and underline any words you do not understand. Find out their meanings from your teacher (or in your text notes).

The performance you have done should help your understanding of this speech. Work with a partner to write a version of the speech in your own words. Rehearse your speech and perform it to the rest of the class.

TASK 2

Pretend you are Macbeth. Write a diary entry just before you kill Duncan. Remember to include:

1. how he feels about the murder; (Is he one hundred per cent sure?)
2. what he thinks is guiding him; (A dagger / witchcraft / the bell?)
3. what he thinks of himself; (He compares himself to Tarquin / a ghost.)
4. how he is hypersensitive to sights and sounds; (Are these sights and sounds real, or a figment of his guilty imagination?)

I go, and it is done...

ACT 4 SCENE 1

A cavern. In the middle, a boiling cauldron. Thunder. Enter the three Witches.



FIRST W: Thrice the brinded cat hath mewed.
SECOND W: Thrice and once the hedge-pig whined.
THIRD W: Harpier cries, "'Tis time, 'tis time."
FIRST W: Round about the cauldron go;
In the poison'd entrails throw.
Toad that under cold stone
Days and nights has thirty-one
Swelter'd venom, sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.

ALL: Double, double, toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.
SECOND W: Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake;
Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg and howlet's wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth, boil and bubble.

ALL: Double, double, toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

THIRD W: Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,
Witch's mummy, maw and gulf
Of the ravined salt-sea shark,
Root of hemlock digged i' the dark,
Liver of blaspheming Jew,
Gall of goat, and slips of yew
Slivered in the moon's eclipse,
Nose of Turk, and Tartar's lips,
Finger of birth-strangled babe,
Ditch-deliver'd by a drab,
Make the gruel thick and slab.
Add thereto a tiger's chaudron,
For the ingredients of our cauldron.

ALL: Double, double, toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

SECOND W: Cool it with a baboon's blood,
Then the charm is firm and good.

Enter Hecate and the other three Witches.

HECATE: O, well done! I commend your pains,
And everyone shall share i' the gains.
And now about the cauldron sing,
Like elves and fairies in a ring,
Enchanting all that you put in.

Music and a song, "Black spirits." Hecate retires.

SECOND W: By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes.
Open, locks, whoever knocks!

Enter Macbeth.

MACBETH: How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags!
What is't you do?

ALL: A deed without a name.

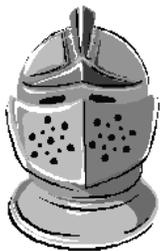
MACBETH: I conjure you, by that which you profess
(Howe'er you come to know it) answer me -
Though you untie the winds and let them fight
Against the churches, though the vesty waves
Confound and swallow navigation up,
Though bladed corn be lodged and trees blown down,
Though castles topple on their warders' heads,
Though palaces and pyramids do slope
Their heads to their foundations, though the treasure
Of nature's germens tumble all together
Even till destruction sicken - answer me
To what I ask you.

FIRST W: Speak
SECOND W: Demand.
THIRD W: We'll answer.
FIRST W: Say, if thou'dst rather hear it from our mouths,
Or from our masters'?

MACBETH: Call 'em, let me see 'em.
FIRST W: Pour in sow's blood that hath eaten
Her nine farrow; grease that's sweaten
From the murderer's gibbet, throw
Into the flame.

ALL: Come, high or low;
Thyself and office deftly show!

Thunder. First Apparition: an armed Head.



MACBETH: Tell me, thou unknown power-
FIRST W: He knows thy thought:
Hear his speech, but say thou naught.

1ST APPARITION: Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! Beware Macduff!
Beware the Thane of Fife! Dismiss me. Enough.

Descends.

MACBETH: Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution, thanks;
Thou hast harp'd my fear aright. But one word more -
FIRST W: He will not be commanded. Here's another,
More potent than the first.

Thunder. Second Apparition: a bloody Child.



2ND APPARITION: Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!

MACBETH: Had I three ears, I'd hear thee.

2ND APPARITION: Be bloody, bold, and resolute: laugh to scorn
The power of man, for none of woman born
Shall harm Macbeth.

Descends.

MACBETH: Then live, Macduff. What need I fear of thee?
But yet I'll make assurance double sure,
And take a bond of fate: thou shalt not live,
That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies,
And sleep in spite of thunder.

*Thunder. Third Apparition: a Child crowned, with a tree in
his hand.*

What is this,
That rises like the issue of a king,
And wears upon his baby brow the round
And top of sovereignty?

ALL: Listen, but speak not to't.

3RD APPARITION: Be lion-mettled, proud, and take no care
Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are.
Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be, until
Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill
Shall come against him.

Descends.



MACBETH: That will never be.
Who can impress the forest, bid the tree
Unfix his earth-bound root? Sweet bodements! Good!
Rebellious dead rise never till the Wood
Of Birnam rise, and our high-placed Macbeth
Shall live the lease of nature, pay his breath
To time and mortal custom. Yet my heart
Throbs to know one thing: tell me, if your art
Can tell so much, shall Banquo's issue ever
Reign in this kingdom?

ALL: Seek to know no more.

MACBETH: I will be satisfied! Deny me this,
And an eternal curse fall on you! Let me know.
Why sinks that cauldron, and what noise is this?

FIRST W: Show!

SECOND W: Show!

THIRD W: Show!

ALL: Show his eyes, and grieve his heart;
Come like shadows, so depart!

*A show of eight Kings, the last with a glass in his hand; Banquo's
Ghost following.*



*'BY THE PRICKING OF MY THUMBS,
SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES.'*

